

State of Alaska FY2008 Governor's Operating Budget

Department of Labor and Workforce Development Vocational Rehabilitation Results Delivery Unit Budget Summary

Vocational Rehabilitation Results Delivery Unit

Contribution to Department's Mission

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation contributes to the department's mission by assisting individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment.

Core Services

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is a combined federal/state program under the authority of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998. The division works to assist in accomplishing the individualized employment goals of each person with a disability. A full array of vocational rehabilitation services, independent living services, support and assistance in employment, assistive technology, and referrals are offered.

In partnership with other state agencies, private sector businesses, vendors, and non-profit organizations, individuals are assisted in obtaining and maintaining employment. The division also provides training to employers on hiring practice changes and training and assistance regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The division adjudicates claims on behalf of the Social Security Administration for Title II and Title XVI applicants for disability benefits and provides referrals for services. In addition, the division is the agency responsible for executive branch compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Administrative Order #129.

End Results	Strategies to Achieve Results
<p>A: Alaskans with disabilities enter employment and become more economically self-sufficient.</p> <p><u>Target #1:</u> Equal prior year's number of employed individuals exiting the vocational rehabilitation program.</p> <p><u>Measure #1:</u> Number of employed individuals exiting the vocational rehabilitation program.</p> <p><u>Target #2:</u> The average wage of employed individuals exiting the program is 65% of the State's average wage.</p> <p><u>Measure #2:</u> Percentage of the average wage of individuals exiting the program employed as compared to the federally reported average state wage.</p>	<p>A1: Improve timeliness of service delivery.</p> <p><u>Target #1:</u> 85% of eligibility determinations made within 60 days.</p> <p><u>Measure #1:</u> Percent of eligibility determinations made within 60 days.</p> <p><u>Target #2:</u> 70% of Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) developed within 100 days.</p> <p><u>Measure #2:</u> Percent of IPEs developed within 100 days.</p> <p>A2: Exceed the federal standard for successfully completed Individual Plans for Employment (IPEs).</p> <p><u>Target #1:</u> 56% or more of IPEs are successfully completed with individuals exiting the vocational rehabilitation program employed.</p> <p><u>Measure #1:</u> Percent of successfully completed plans.</p>

Major Activities to Advance Strategies

- Improve customer service through integrated services at Job Centers to increase employment opportunities for Alaskans with disabilities
- Educate employers, partners and customers to assist people with disabilities to achieve their career goals.
- Develop partnerships with employers for assessment sites.
- Build partnerships with Centers for Independent Living.
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FY2008 Resources Allocated to Achieve Results

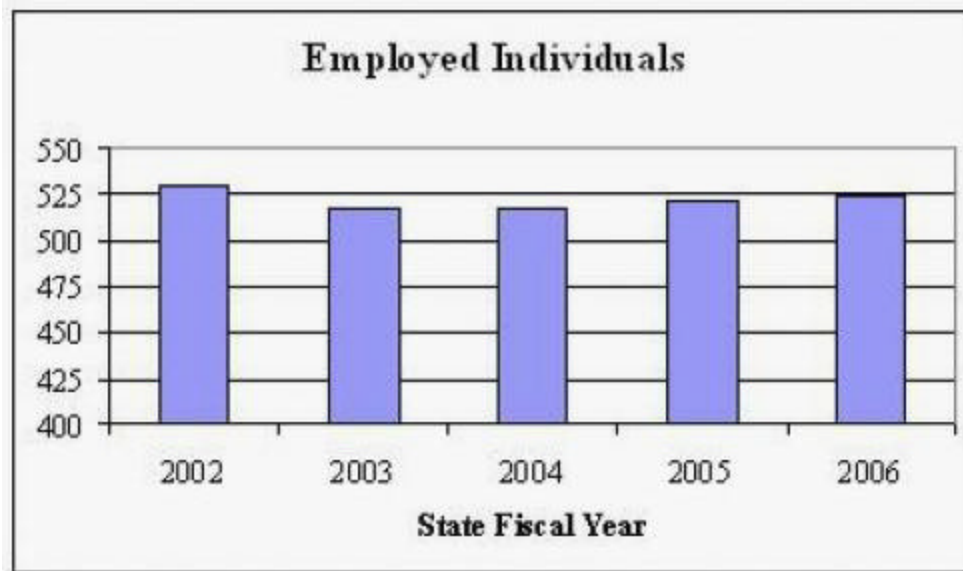
FY2008 Results Delivery Unit Budget: \$24,690,200

Personnel:

Full time	131
Part time	1
Total	132

Performance Measure Detail

A: Result - Alaskans with disabilities enter employment and become more economically self-sufficient.

Target #1: Equal prior year's number of employed individuals exiting the vocational rehabilitation program.**Measure #1:** Number of employed individuals exiting the vocational rehabilitation program.

Employed Individuals

Fiscal Year	YTD Total
FY 2002	530
FY 2003	517
FY 2004	517
FY 2005	521
FY 2006	524

Analysis of results and challenges: An individual must be working for a minimum of 90 days prior to being counted as a person exiting the vocational rehabilitation program as employed. The number of individuals employed has remained relatively consistent for the past few years even though the number of applicants entering the program has declined. In FY2005 DVR served 4,036 individuals and in FY2006 we served 3,960.

Both staff and financial resources also affect the number of individuals the division is able to assist in becoming employed. With level funding and the difficulty the agency has in recruiting qualified staff to replace our retiring experienced counselors, the division is challenged to maintain the current level of production.

Target #2: The average wage of employed individuals exiting the program is 65% of the State's average wage.

Measure #2: Percentage of the average wage of individuals exiting the program employed as compared to the federally reported average state wage.

VR Consumer Wages as a Percent of State Wages

Fiscal Year	YTD Total	Target
FY 2002	69%	65%
FY 2003	70%	65%
FY 2004	66%	65%
FY 2005	67%	65%
FY 2006	67%	65%

Analysis of results and challenges: Alaska DVR works with individuals with disabilities to help them find good jobs with wages that allow them to become self-sufficient and with career opportunities.

The federal standard for the average wages of those exiting the VR program employed should equal 52% of the state's average wages. Alaska VR believes we should do better than this national goal and have set our target at 65%.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics shows the current average wage in Alaska is \$19.33. The current average wage for VR consumers exiting the program employed is \$12.93 which is well above the State's minimum wage of \$7.15.

A1: Strategy - Improve timeliness of service delivery.

Target #1: 85% of eligibility determinations made within 60 days.

Measure #1: Percent of eligibility determinations made within 60 days.

Percent of Eligibility Determinations made within 60 Days

Fiscal Year	YTD Total
FY 2002	80%
FY 2003	80%
FY 2004	76%
FY 2005	84%
FY 2006	82%

Analysis of results and challenges: Making an eligibility decision within 60 days from application is good customer service, good rehabilitation and is based on federal regulation. An individual is also less likely to leave the program if there is action on their case. The Division's goal of 85% exceeds the Federal goal of 75%.

Federal regulations do allow for eligibility extensions when there are circumstances beyond our control and the individual agrees to an extension. When these extensions are included, the percentage increases to 92%. Extensions indicate the VR counselor is actively involved in the case and work is being done to make an eligibility decision.

Even so, the Division is taking the following steps to increase the actual number of determinations made within 60 days:

1. Provide additional training to counselor and managers on use of monitoring tools and importance of timely case movement; and
2. Additional oversight at Division level.

Target #2: 70% of Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) developed within 100 days.

Measure #2: Percent of IPEs developed within 100 days.

Percent of IPEs Developed within 100 Days

Fiscal Year	YTD Total
FY 2002	68%
FY 2003	68%
FY 2004	63%
FY 2005	63%
FY 2006	56%

Analysis of results and challenges: This is a stretch target for the division and is self imposed. The division believes timely plan development is good customer service and keeps the individual active and involved with the vocational rehabilitation process.

The people we are serving have very complicated lives and the planning process often gets interrupted. Plan development is also the time in the vocational rehabilitation process when various assessments are done to determine the individual's interests and capabilities. These activities do not always go as planned due to missed appointments or other issues.

The division has set a goal that 70% of the plans will be written and implemented within 100 days. We have been unsuccessful in meeting this goal but are unwilling to give up trying. Recent data analysis indicates that we have had a 36% turnover in our counseling staff in the last two years and a 45% turnover in support staff. Hopefully as our staff stabilizes and becomes better trained, we will begin to see an improvement in this strategy.

A2: Strategy - Exceed the federal standard for successfully completed Individual Plans for Employment (IPEs).

Target #1: 56% or more of IPEs are successfully completed with individuals exiting the vocational rehabilitation program employed.

Measure #1: Percent of successfully completed plans.

Percent of Completed IPEs Resulting in Employment

Fiscal Year	YTD Total
FY 2002	59%
FY 2003	58%
FY 2004	62%
FY 2005	62%
FY 2006	62%

Analysis of results and challenges: An Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) is considered successfully completed when an individual receives the necessary services as identified on the IPE to obtain employment and the employment is maintained for 90 days.

IPEs are very comprehensive and time consuming to develop as they delineate the employment goal, the type of services required to reach said goal, the estimated costs, who will provide the services and the length of time to complete the plan. Successful plans require the knowledge of certified vocational rehabilitation counselors, active client involvement, labor market research and evaluation of the client's abilities.

This measure speaks to the above being done thoroughly and efficiently with successful employment outcomes. The division has elected to use the federal standard for this strategy as it helps to remind staff of the importance of good planning without giving undue emphasis to those plans that do not succeed.

Key RDU Challenges

The unemployment rate of people with disabilities continues to be about 47% which is significantly higher than the general population. This unemployment rate is even higher in rural Alaska. The continuing challenge is to provide services to rural Alaska and develop employment opportunities.

Funding has not been adequate to serve all individuals especially those with cross and multiple disabilities. These groups include individuals with severe mental illness, developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injuries and those who are blind and deaf.

Ensure that people with disabilities are empowered to make meaningful and informed decisions consistent with the Vocational Rehabilitation Act.

Significant Changes in Results to be Delivered in FY2008

The Division will increase outreach to employers to promote understanding of disability issues and the financial incentives to hire persons with disabilities.

Major RDU Accomplishments in 2006

Assisted in the passage of House Bill 357 which updated the terminology in various State statutes by making it more consistent with and reflective of the disability community's goals and agenda.

524 individuals with significant physical and/or mental impairments that constituted barriers to employment were successfully placed in employment as a result of vocational rehabilitation services.

Southeast Alaska Independent Living hosted the local Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program for training focusing on mental health and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Outreach was conducted in the communities of Hoonah, Petersburg, Wrangell and Ketchikan. To better identify the needs of the Filipino population, meetings were held with the newly elected Filipino Community Leader.

The Customized Employment Grant (CEG) project just completed its fourth year of a five-year plan. Its proven demonstration of effective workforce development practices are now being adopted both statewide and nationally. In fact, the ODEP (Office of Disability and Employment Policy) recently recognized Alaska's CEG project as one of the top in the country. As a result, this project was chosen as one for continued funding support in FY 2008 despite national funding cuts. There were only 4 projects of 29 requests that received these funds nationally. In addition, ODEP's national Program Director, Chris Button, traveled to Alaska last summer to learn more about how we can share best practices on a national level.

During the past year the major focus of our assistive technology activities has been through our contract with the Assistive Technology Library of Alaska (ATLA) in the areas of education, community services, employment and information technology. There has been an increase in the access and acquisition of assistive technology through significant awareness activities and events, demonstrations of equipment, training, technical assistance and collaboration and coordination with an increasing number of partners.

The division served all eligible consumers without going into an order of selection.

Contact Information

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Vocational Rehabilitation RDU Financial Summary by Component

All dollars shown in thousands

	FY2006 Actuals				FY2007 Management Plan				FY2008 Governor			
	General Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds
Formula												
Expenditures												
None.												
Non-Formula												
Expenditures												
Voc Rehab	0.8	1,203.3	38.1	1,242.2	3.2	1,407.6	52.9	1,463.7	140.1	1,407.8	52.9	1,600.8
Administration												
Client Services	3,121.5	7,923.0	277.0	11,321.5	3,219.5	9,744.1	392.2	13,355.8	4,030.1	9,744.1	423.4	14,197.6
Independent	675.9	539.0	0.0	1,214.9	823.8	770.8	0.0	1,594.6	723.8	770.8	0.0	1,494.6
Living												
Rehabilitat												
Disability	1.9	3,768.9	184.3	3,955.1	1.9	4,477.1	216.9	4,695.9	1.9	4,729.9	229.5	4,961.3
Determination												
Special Projects	86.0	857.7	27.1	970.8	86.7	1,546.3	0.0	1,633.0	86.7	1,573.0	0.0	1,659.7
Assistive	0.0	332.3	96.0	428.3	0.0	450.0	96.0	546.0	0.0	457.4	96.0	553.4
Technology												
Americans With	0.0	0.0	154.5	154.5	0.0	0.0	207.8	207.8	0.0	0.0	222.8	222.8
Disabilities												
Totals	3,886.1	14,624.2	777.0	19,287.3	4,135.1	18,395.9	965.8	23,496.8	4,982.6	18,683.0	1,024.6	24,690.2

**Vocational Rehabilitation
Summary of RDU Budget Changes by Component
From FY2007 Management Plan to FY2008 Governor**

All dollars shown in thousands

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2007 Management Plan	4,135.1	18,395.9	965.8	23,496.8
Adjustments which will continue current level of service:				
-Voc Rehab Administration	136.9	-136.7	0.0	0.2
-Client Services	610.1	-610.1	0.2	0.2
-Americans With Disabilities	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2
Proposed budget decreases:				
-Independent Living Rehabilitat	-100.0	0.0	0.0	-100.0
Proposed budget increases:				
-Voc Rehab Administration	0.0	136.9	0.0	136.9
-Client Services	200.5	610.1	31.0	841.6
-Disability Determination	0.0	252.8	12.6	265.4
-Special Projects	0.0	26.7	0.0	26.7
-Assistive Technology	0.0	7.4	0.0	7.4
-Americans With Disabilities	0.0	0.0	14.8	14.8
FY2008 Governor	4,982.6	18,683.0	1,024.6	24,690.2